Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

Chapter XII

LIFE STORIES OF LIVING KOLS

Sunnulal: A Kol who Stayed in his Village

I was born in the village of Kharara Ghat and was the youngest of five brothers. There were also three sisters in my family, which was a large one, as there are about fifty living relatives on my father's side alone. When I was about sixteen years of age my parents decided that I should be married and they found a girl for me in the village of Barela. My wife and I have lived happily together, and we have had two sons. My father died two years ago (in 1935). I have never had to leave Kharara Ghat in order to earn money. I have always seemed to be able to find things to do about the village and have earned enough to be well supplied with the things I need. One thing I do is to go into the forest and cut wood which I carry on my head to Jubbulpore. It is hard work, but it has to be done. My wife and sons also help out by gathering *tendu* leaves for the *biri* manufacturers. All of my five brothers live here in Barela. Together we control about fifteen acres of land which is rented from a *malguzar*. It is not all in one place, but in three or four places. We all do our share of work on this, and the income from the wheat and pulse is shared evenly by us. But all the money I make from selling wood, or grass, or *tendu* leaves I keep myself and we do not share it.

I have become one of the *panchayat* of this village and take a keen interest in the welfare of this village and our community. I would like you to put a school in our village. The nearest school is four miles away—too far for our small children to go even if we were sure they would be treated right if they were admitted. I can read a little and sign my name. I never went to school, but learned this from a man in Jubbulpore, who used to teach me after I had sold my wood. I even have bought some books.

I have no debts and do not drink any strong liquors. I have never been seriously ill, nor had any serious trouble in the family, nor have we suffered from the want of food and clothing. I have never had an accident either even though I have gone on hunting expeditions in charge of beaters. Very often some Europeans from Jubbulpore come out to our village which is close to good hunting places and I go with them and show them where they may find game.